

## A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE FORESTER



**LINDA S. CASEY**  
State Forester

Since coming on board February 1st of this year, I've had the opportunity to visit some of our county and regional offices, getting acquainted with Alabama Forestry Commission associates across the state. Those foresters and rangers in the field are the backbone of this agency – the ones who fight the wildfires, plow the firelanes, and work one-on-one with our landowners.

I've also had the privilege of meeting several of our forest landowners face to face. Two of these that I met recently were very inspiring to me. Each unique in their own way, there is a common denominator that they both share: they love their land. (Please read their stories on pages 24 and 25.)

I want to assure you that we, the Alabama Forestry Commission, will remain strong in our mission to protect our forests from fire and pests, to sustain our forest resources by assisting landowners, and to educate all citizens of the value and benefits of our renewable forest resources.

Challenges and opportunities are before us as we experience dramatic changes in our forests such as fragmentation from industry-owned forestland to small-acreage private ownership; expanding urban growth into forested areas resulting in increased exposure to potentially devastating wildfires; health issues unheard of a few years ago such as the IPS Engraver Beetle; population growth impacting quality and availability of clean water; and the new issue of carbon sequestration.

Our associates accept and will strive to use the challenges that confront us, as well as opportunities that arise, to benefit and educate landowners, stakeholders, and the public to ensure that our forests are healthy and productive for all citizens.

The time ahead will indeed be challenging, but I have confidence that our AFC team can achieve great things in the future. I am thrilled to be the new State Forester of Alabama . . . proud to be a part of this Alabama Forestry Commission family.

*Linda S. Casey*